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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1493
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 7328
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 8539
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 4601
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 9845
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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT URIBE BACKS COURTS--AND PROVIDES
RESOURCES--IN PARAMILITARY-POLITICAL INVESTIGATIONS

REF: BOGOTA 10976 AND PREVIOUS

President Backs Courts--and Provides Resources

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¶1. On December 20, at President Uribe's initiative, he and leaders from the Colombian Judicial branch agreed to create a special investigative unit within the Supreme Court to investigate political connections to ex-paramilitaries, and other allegations against government officials. Uribe promised to provide 18 assistants and investigators to the Court's penal division charged with judging members of Congress and other public officials. Three Congressmen have been indicted for paramilitary connections, six more have been called before the court to testify, and more cases are expected (reftel). The Court has 150 investigations underway involving members of government or Congress. Judicial officials tell us this will give them an important tool to move ahead on the most important investigations.

GoC Wants Story Out

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¶2. President Uribe wants to get to the truth about the paramilitary-political scandal and other cases of official misconduct. His initiative to provide the court with an independent--and unprecedented--investigative unit to augment existing investigatory assets in the executive branch is more proof that the president fully supports the institutions responsible for finding, and acting on, the truth.

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